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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
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TO : DRN/NIS -

DATE: October 25, 1955

FROM : DRN/GTIB -

SUBJECT: Transliteration Handbook HB 50-150-1, January 1954

In regard to your memorandum of October 11, 1955, the Greek alphabet in this Transliteration Handbook is on the whole acceptable and has practical applicability. There are a few points which need to be reconsidered, and the following observations and suggestions are presented to the authors of the handbook.

1. This Greek alphabet leaves out an important sound in modern Greek, namely "Dj" or "Tz" (τς) which appears frequently in personal and place names, such as Tzanetatos, Tzamaloukas, Tziristra, Tzamali, Tzouanna, etc. Often the Greek Tz is transliterated in English with the letters DJ as in Hadjis which is the prefix of many Greek surnames. It would be preferable to be consistent and use the TZ. Thus Hatzis.

2. Closely related to TZ (τς) is the sound TS, (τσ) as a lighter sound used in words and names, such as Tsoukalokhori, Tsoutsa, Tsouderos, Tsirimokos, etc. Often the two are confused. For this reason identification of these two sounds, which are of foreign origin in modern Greek, would be useful.

3. It might be advisable to retain the "PH" (φ) for the words and names of Greek etymological origin and "F" for the many foreign words and names introduced in modern Greek. The "Ph" in the English language is a wellfixed symbol which sounds like "f". For instance Philadelphia would look odd as Filadelfia. Other names Philipoupolis, Philipiada, Phokis, Phthiotis, etc. No one can mistake Ph for any other sound than "f". But "f" would have its usefulness in words and names in the Greek language which have a foreign origin such as: Farsalla, Foundoukas, Frangadhes, etc.

4. The "iv" (νι) might be dropped since it will rarely, if ever, come up for transliteration of names and place names and even in the case of all words in the nominative case.

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5. While "ng" for "γκ" serves a good purpose, mb and nd are hardly necessary. For the latter two, the simple "b" and "d" will do. For instance the Greek name Mpakopoulos can be better rendered Bakopoulos rather than Mbakopoulos. There are many words and names in Greek that have a straight "b" sound. Since the Greek "β" we transliterate as "v", we may reserve the English "b" for the "μπ" sound in modern Greek.

6. We suggest that the diacriticals be retained. Gaidouronisi needs diacriticals if the Diphthong "ai" is to be shown in Athenai, Phaidros, and Paideia, etc.

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